CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 8 March 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Emeka Ayo Azikiwe (Nigeria)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 541st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As members are aware, today is International Women's Day, which is celebrated worldwide every year. The Conference on Disarmament has for some time now had occasion to join in commemorating this important event by receiving the views and concerns of organizations representing women all over the world. Today it is our pleasure to have with us the participants in the Women's Meeting for International Women's Day which is being held in the Palais des Nations. I should like to extend to them, as well as to all women involved in the work of the Conference, our congratulations on their special day, which has such great significance. The participants in the Women's Meeting have addressed a message to the Conference, which will be read out by the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for the information of the members and for the records of the Conference. I invite Ambassador Komatina to take the floor.

Mr. KOMATINA (Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): The message, as you said, is addressed to the members of the Conference on Disarmament.

"We are more than 90 women from 19 countries who have gathered here to mark International Women's Day and to promote equality, peace, and general and complete disarmament including a world without nuclear arms.

"The theme of our first meeting of this decade is the health, genetic and environmental consequences of nuclear radiation from weapons production and testing. As women, we are deeply alarmed by the growing evidence of human suffering and ecological destruction caused by nuclear activities world-wide. The available evidence has convinced us that a death process in the species has begun. We would be happy to make available to the members of the Conference written and visual material presented at our meeting.

"In recent months, the political climate in Europe has substantially changed, reinforcing the negotiations for the reductions of conventional forces on the continent. This easing of tensions and the process of conventional disarmament needs to be extended to all regions of the world.

"We welcome the progress achieved on a convention banning the production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. While we recognize the complexity of the negotiations, we are aware of the continuing danger that chemical weapons may be used in regional conflicts. We urge the Conference to increase its efforts to overcome the remaining obstacles and conclude the treaty by the end of this year.

"A comprehensive test-ban treaty is a vital first step towards ending the nuclear arms race and proceeding with disarmament. As long as testing and weapons production continue, the significance of disarmament agreements such as the INF Treaty could be reduced to a minor notation in the history of an unrelenting arms race. Therefore, we urge you to

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establish an ad hoc committee on a comprehensive test-ban treaty with a view to the negotiation of a treaty and, furthermore, to establish an ad hoc committee to address the question of the cessation of the arms race and nuclear disarmament.

"We will continue to follow the work of the Conference on Disarmament with deep interest. We assure you of our support for all your efforts and wish you every success."

Here ends the message.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference for reading out the message addressed to us by the Women's Meeting for International Women's Day. On behalf of the Conference, I thank the participants in that Meeting for the message they have addressed to us on important questions relating to disarmament. I wish also to extend to them our best wishes for the successful conclusion of their deliberations.

In accordance with its programme of work, the Conference will continue today its consideration of agenda item 5, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". In conformity with rule 30 of its rules of procedure, however, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

As announced at our last plenary meeting, we are to take up for decision today a request by a non-member to participate in the work of the Conference. I should also like to inform you that the consultations relating to the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee under agenda item 5, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", have been successfully concluded. I intend, therefore, to put today before the Conference for adoption a draft decision relating to this question, as well as the appointment of the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee. In order to do so, we shall follow the usual procedure - that is, I will convene an informal meeting of the Conference once we reach the end of the list of speakers. We shall subsequently resume the plenary meeting to formalize the decisions considered at the informal meeting.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Sweden, Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany. I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Hyltenius.

Mr. HYLTENIUS (Sweden): It is a great honour for me and my country to speak in the presence of the women who have gathered in Geneva to mark International Women's Day and to observe th work of the Conference on Disarmament. I have listened attentively to the message addressed to us, as just read out by the Secretary-General of the Conference. The concern for the effects of nuclear testing is shared by Sweden. The demand for a complete ban on nuclear testing has been actively pursued over the years by prominent women representing the Swedish Government - Alva Myrdal, Inga Thorsson and Maj Britt Theorin. In spite of all the efforts made by Sweden and many other States, and in spite of the fact that the test ban issue is the first item on

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the agenda of this Conference, there are still, much to our regret, no negotiations going on in this forum on what ought to be the top priority of its work. However, 1990 is a crucial year, and I can assure you that the Swedish delegation, for its part, will spare no effort to assist in getting substantive work on a nuclear test ban started without further delay. In these efforts it is essential to build on broad international opinion, as expressed not only by overwhelming majorities in the United Nations General Assembly, but also by a dedicated and well-informed public opinion behind Governments. Non-governmental organizations also play a vital role of their own in this context. Many of the questions we deal with in this Conference are essential for the future of humanity. Your presence and your message today testify to your active engagement in these questions and to the important contributions which are being made by women's organizations all over the world.

According to the work programme of the Conference, this week should be devoted to the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and this will be the subject of my intervention today. However, before addressing this subject I should like to express the great satisfaction of my delegation at seeing you, Sir, presiding over the Conference. Sweden and Nigeria, both members of the Group of 21, have co-operated very closely on many issues over the years. Against this background, and in view of your personal and professional qualifications, I know that the Conference is in very good hands. I am sure that you will guide us in a very effective manner during the month of March. I should also like to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Wagenmakers of the Netherlands, for the excellent way in which he carried out his duties during the month of February. Thanks to his personal endeavours a number of difficult issues were resolved at the outset of this year's session.

More than three decades have elapsed since the beginning of the space era. Nearly 4,000 satellites have since then been launched into orbit. Many States have considerable space programmes and have made heavy investments in peaceful space activities. Only a few, however, have the financial and technological basis for the entire spectrum of space technology, including launching capabilities.

Satellites are likely to become less expensive in the future, as will civilian space services. Sophisticated multi-purpose satellites will probably become less frequent and give way to satellites designed for more limited tasks. Such satellites can be launched by relatively small rockets, at least into low Earth orbits.

Almost all functions performed and services offered by space technology deal with information transmission. Space technology is in fact one of the cornerstones of today's information society. Virtually all States are making substantial use of space programmes in one way or another, especially with regard to communications.

Some of the satellites which play an essential role in verifying disarmament and arms limitation agreements, and other surveillance satellites in low Earth orbit, which can be important for stability, may already be threatened by existing anti-satellite techniques. For example, communication

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and early warning satellites in geosynchronous orbit - which are even more crucial to stability - will, as a result of technological developments, get within closer reach as potential targets for military attacks.

These developments give rise to serious concern. In my intervention before the Conference on Disarmament on 11 July last year I touched upon the new emphasis apparently being given to anti-satellite programmes. This new emphasis may be attributed to the fact that a major increase has occurred in the number and capabilities of several categories of military satellites. Moreover, a "diffusion" of military space functions seems to be taking place from the strategic down to the tactical level.

The distinction between anti-satellite weapons and strategic defence weapons may not be very clear in some cases. Not only would a ballistic missile defence system be destabilizing: spin-offs of investments originally made for ballistic missile defence purposes could also introduce incentives for new ASAT ventures that would fuel an arms race in outer space.

Since some ASAT systems can have dual ASAT and ABM capabilities, and vice versa, another disturbing phenomenon is that the testing of ASAT weapons could be interpreted as testing of ABM weapons, running counter to the provisions of the ABM Treaty.

Technological developments may also allow for a horizontal spread of ASAT capabilities, as pointed out by the then representative of Sri Lanka to the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Rodrigo, in a statement in this Conference on 22 June last year. He stated:

> "If the current space Powers do not support a multilateral process for preventing the weaponization of space, the entire existing space system, which is said to provide strategic stability, could with the inevitable proliferation of military space technology, become a soft strategic target."

Since 1985, when the Conference on Disarmament established an Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, it has carried out useful work in scrutinizing relevant agreements, identifying pertinent issues and elaborating concrete proposals. It has by now been clearly demonstrated through this work that existing international law is insufficient to prevent an arms race in outer space. The protection offered by the current international agreements is not only insufficient; it will increasingly diminish in the face of rapid changes brought about by emerging technologies.

We must not put ourselves in a situation where we will have to address the necessity of negotiating disarmament agreements pertaining to outer space. We are all too well acquainted with the difficulties in trying to reverse a process which has already been supported by heavy political and financial investment. There is therefore an urgent need for the international community to take effective measures to prevent outer space from becoming a new arena for the arms race and thereby also a potential battlefield of the future.

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The overwhelming majority of the members of the United Nations General Assembly have repeatedly urged the Conference on Disarmament to establish a more operative mandate than hitherto for its Ad hoc Committee on this issue. Regrettably, neither the United Nations resolutions nor the reiterated calls by the Group of 21 to this effect have as yet gained the full support of the Conference. The lessening of tension in international affairs should permit a new approach also for this crucial global task before us. An arms race in outer space would negatively affect all States.

My delegation has identified certain measures that, as a first step, should promote crisis stability and strengthen international security. First of all we have proposed that negotiations should start in the Conference on Disarmament on a ban on what are known as dedicated anti-satellite systems. Such a ban was the subject of bilateral talks between the two major space Powers some years ago. As a matter of fact, a de facto moratorium on ASAT testing has been in existence for some years now.

A more challenging task is to come to grips with the many non-dedicated capabilities that can be used for ASAT functions. The Swedish delegation has recommended that agreements be negotiated to ban the testing of such types of devices in an anti-satellite mode. Such a functional approach has a precedent in the ABM Treaty, which refers to testing "in an ABM mode". This would help solve the great difficulty of covering a wide range of techniques which, although not originally designed for ASAT functions, could be modified for such purposes without great difficulty.

The fact that my delegation attaches the highest priority to concrete measures to prevent an arms race in outer space does not imply that we dismiss the relevance of measures to promote increased transparency and confidence-building in space activities. An ASAT ban naturally does not exclude the need for "rules of the road" and other confidence-building measures. We are in fact carefully studying such proposals that have recently been made in the Conference on Disarmament. These proposals deserve to be further discussed in the Ad hoc Committee.

Just to briefly touch upon some of the concepts in this context, I wish to refer to the various ideas that have been put forward concerning immunity for satellites, including the possibility of extending the immunity of the space segment of a satellite to include a certain area surrounding it. Some of these ideas raise questions of principle in international law and may affect provisions in existing treaties. According to the outer space Treaty, outer space "shall be free for exploration and use by all States without discrimination". No "creeping jurisdiction" can be accepted in this regard. In our view, however, an anti-satellite test ban appears to be the most effective method to render protection to satellites. Such a ban would well serve international stability and security. The need for increased transparency regarding satellite activities could be met, for instance, by better use and strengthening of the registration Convention.

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It goes without saying that agreements on measures to prevent an arms race in outer space will have to be supported by stringent verification régimes. Concrete work on verification should therefore start in the Conference on Disarmament. Ambassador Reese of Australia touched upon this in a statement to the plenary of the Conference on 23 March 1989, where he stated:

> "Technology is now sufficiently advanced to provide reasonable assurances that bilateral arms control agreements can be effectively verified. The availability to multinational bodies of strategically significant technologies such as space-based remote sensing of spacecraft or of the Earth has also become a reality. The examination of evolving verification technologies and how they could be put to good use in issues related to arms control in outer space is therefore another area which warrants serious examination by our Ad hoc Committee."

At last year's summer session scientific and technical experts from Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic made interesting contributions with regard to verification questions. Such expert input contributes to the advancement of the work of the Ad hoc Committee.

By addressing concrete issues connected with an international régime to prevent an arms race in outer space we choose not to resign ourselves to becoming the passive spectators of uncontrolled development powered by its own dynamics, but to engage in the forward-looking pursuit of common security and a safer international environment for all.

Many of the techniques that may be of interest for confidence-building régimes could perhaps also be relevant for verification of measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. I shall therefore briefly deal with some methods which may be considered for observation and verification tasks - such as observation of satellite orbits or of a satellite's payload and its functions - and which may be of pertinence to different space-related activities.

The fact that the orbiting of satellites is governed by the simple law of dynamics makes observation of satellite movements comparatively uncomplicated. Although orbits may be altered by on-board rockets, for instance, this is an energy-demanding and slow process.

Simple radar systems for acquisition of orbital parameters of satellites in low Earth orbits are moderately costly. For geostationary orbits, on the other hand, radar systems need both considerably larger antennas and very strong transmitting power, which obviously increases complexity and costs.

Until now radar systems have had very limited capacity for imaging or for identifying small structural/geometrical details, which has led to consideration of verification concepts based on satellite-borne instead of ground-based sensors. However, with synthetic aperture radars (SAR), which use a microwave imaging technique for moving sensor platforms, radar systems are acquiring improved capabilities. Multistatic systems with one transmitter and several receivers permit imaging of details far beyond the resolution

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given by the radar antenna itself. If data acquisition is carried out over an extended time during a satellite's passage, more advanced data for identification are attainable even for ground-based radar systems.

As to other available technical means of observation and verification, mention could be made of the tagging of satellites. Tags could, for example, be integrated with beacons or navigation systems so that through satellite communication channels an observing ground station could acquire information concerning the satellite's whereabouts.

I also wish to refer to the interesting idea of a multilateral trajectography centre, presented in the plenary on 18 July last year by Ambassador Morel of France, and further developed by his delegation in the Ad hoc Committee. It presents challenges to both computer systems and system security. Such a body should aim at providing maximum openness. The idea should in the view of my delegation be the subject of further technical discussions.

Since ordinary tracking techniques intended for the tracking of a State's national satellites are generally not adequate for verification of orbital data for satellites belonging to other States, a world-wide network of observation stations, based on radars and optical telescopes, could be established. In this way, States could be efficiently alerted when satellites are not following certain "rules of the road", as well as when larger space debris is on a collision course with satellites. With approximately 7,000 objects in space today, roughly three quarters of which are some kind of space debris, the need for tackling this problem is apparent.

The establishment of an international space surveillance agency could be instrumental in verifying compliance with treaties relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. A global verification system would also have to take into account other means of verification, such as pre-launch inspections to determine the function of a spacecraft, tagging and sealing devices, satellite-borne sensors and other techniques. My delegation would welcome a continuation of the deliberations on these issues, which should be as well structured as possible. We need to establish which verification methods will best serve the task of supporting measures to prevent an arms race in outer space.

At a later stage in this year's session my delegation intends to revert in more detail, and on a technical level, to verification questions which arise in this context.

Let me conclude by underlining the need to arrive at a comprehensive and solid international order to prevent an arms race in outer space. Potentially dangerous developments are always easier to stem as long as they remain mere possibilities. There can be no doubt that it will be considerably less difficult for this Conference to negotiate multilateral agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space than to seek to reverse an uncontrolled process in a couple of years' time.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ambassador von Stülpnagel.

Mr. von STULPNAGEL (Federal Republic of Germany): May I, at the beginning of my statement, welcome the 90 ladies from 19 countries who are here on the occasion of International Women's Day, and may I express to you, Mr. President, my happiness that you are guiding our deliberations here in your experienced and kind way? I might also add my thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Wagenmakers, who did a wonderful job last month in helping us to come to conclusions where we might not have hoped to have the opportunity.

Mr. President, in my statement last month I referred to the historical changes that are taking place in Europe. Artificial barriers dividing Europe are being overcome and Europeans are on the road to co-operative stability, seeking to attain security not by confrontation but by collaboration. These changes are reflected in the negotiations on conventional arms control and on confidence-building and security-building measures in Vienna. The participants in those negotiations are confident that agreements on both subjects can be signed in the course of this year, possibly at a CSCE summit. We also expect an "open skies" treaty to be ready by the end of the second part of the conference to be held from 23 April to 15 May in Budapest.

Maybe the sense of urgency and resolve prevailing in those forums will prove contagious. There is no reason why we should not set ourselves equally ambitious goals for the conclusion of the chemical weapons convention. Otherwise we risk being the last to change in a world of change, or those who did not change in time - as happened to the dinosaurs, you may remember. We all know that the necessary political and material prerequisites for the timely conclusion of our task of drafting a comprehensive and global convention effectively banning chemical weapons exist. Firstly, the Paris Conference held at the beginning of last year definitely made the elimination of existing chemical weapon stockpiles and production facilities, and the prohibition of any further manufacture, acquisition, storage, transfer or use of chemical weapons, a common cause of the whole international community. All States participating in that Conference called upon the Conference on Disarmament to redouble its efforts to resolve expeditiously the remaining issues with a view to concluding the convention at the earliest date. In addition, the world chemical industry strongly endorsed our negotiations at the instigation of the Australian Government at the Canberra Conference last year. Secondly, in terms of material preparation for an early convention, the Conference on Disarmament has over the last few years been engaged in particularly intensive negotiations covering all aspects. So the opportunity must be seized. The outstanding problems need to be addressed resolutely. Solutions to the key issues which have been under discussion for so long cannot be put off time after time.

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Allow me, therefore, to address one of those issues which is of truly crucial importance: challenge inspections. It has been under intensive discussion for almost three years now, so far without a solution. I am convinced that a solution to this problem would not only remove one of the main obstacles in the way of completing the verification system, but would also provide a strong stimulus to tackle the other as yet unresolved issues of the convention.

There seems to be agreement that challenge inspections are indispensable and a corner-stone of the whole verification system, since they constitute an all-embracing measure enabling all States parties, on an entirely equal basis, to clarify doubts about the compliance of others. Despite this basic common understanding, and despite all the efforts undertaken over the past years within the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, divergences of view seem to persist.

Following consultations conducted last year and earlier by the chairmen of the Ad hoc Committee, it seems to me that we have in some respects got bogged down. Divergences seem to have been unduly politicized. They have also gradually grown out of proportion. If we continue in this way we may thwart a solution which is both realistic and meets the requirements of effective verification.

What is needed now is a fresh look at the issues of challenge inspection - a look unclouded by some of our past discussions. The point of departure should be a consideration of the technical nature and the basic political characteristics of challenge inspections. Here some agreement seems to exist - as reflected in such catchwords as challenge inspection as a means to clarify doubts about compliance; the right of each State party to request a challenge inspection any time, anywhere; no refusal of the request; the right and obligation of the requested State party to demonstrate compliance; inspection to be carried out in accordance with the request in the least intrusive manner possible; the right of the requesting State party to observe the inspection; and the right of the inspected State party to protect sensitive equipment or information as far as possible. If there is agreement on these points, why is it not possible to include provisions to that effect in the "rolling text"?

Whenever technical aspects are accompanied by political and psychological sensitivities, our Conference starts to stall. Some say they want the philosophy of a subject to be clarified. Others insist that only the wording - even the final wording - should be at the centre of our deliberations. And in the process we lose the opportunity to take the necessary political decisions. This is the case with regard to challenge inspection too. The question is simply whether this verification method should be a factor of normal life or confrontational in nature. In considering this the following aspects should, in my view, be borne in mind. Firstly, challenge inspections are designed to be implemented on a regular basis, like other verification measures under the convention, but they are triggered by doubts about compliance. Secondly, at the same time, challenge inspections, like all other on-sit inspections, are intended to provide an assurance of compliance by not relying solely on declarations or assurances by State parties but by checking on the spot. In this regard all inspection

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measures are of the same routine nature. Thirdly, challenge inspections may indeed be considered confrontational as they might imply an allegation of non-compliance. However, all inspections are in a way accusatory, as they can be interpreted as indicating disbelief in declarations made by States parties. Fourthly, the nature of challenge inspections is a matter of perception. Perceptions, as we all know, may differ between individuals. In any event challenge inspections must be considered a right and be accepted as an integral and indispensable element of the verification system. Finally, verification is intended to build confidence. Thus challenge inspections must also be perceived as a legitimate means to this end.

In considering and evaluating the elements I have just enumerated, one might wonder whether indeed the word "challenge" is consistent with the nature of the inspections in question, or whether it should not be replaced by a more neutral term like "inspections on request". A corresponding proposal has - as you will remember - already been made in this room.

I have dwelt on the "routine versus confrontational" issue in order to show that a problem-oriented approach may be helpful in settling some of the long-standing moot points in our discussion. I have raised this problem in order to prevent a situation where, in a field of truly multilateral interest, a field where serious multilateral disarmament is possible and achievable, we are outdistanced by bilateral solutions which, while welcome, raise the question of the capacity of this Conference to achieve the goals for which it was constituted.

Let me now address another facet which has gained significance in the discussion: the question of whether challenge inspections are primarily a bilateral or a multilateral instrument. On this issue especially it seems to me that realism and a sense of proportion are required. Otherwise we may get enveloped in futile "ideological" debate.

Challenge inspections should be considered multilateral, as they are part of a multilateral convention guaranteeing equal rights to each of its parties. Compliance is a concern of all parties. In their implementation, challenge inspections are bilateral, in so far as they are triggered by a request from an individual State party for inspections on the territory of another State party. This seems to be a legitimate procedure, as each State party should be able to seek reassurance if it has doubts about the compliance of another State party. If each State has the right to obtain this reassurance by requesting challenge inspections, this enhances confidence in the convention and is thus beneficial to the multilateral convention régime as a whole.

The "multilateral versus bilateral" issue has been at the heart of the discussions on procedures following submission of the report on the result of a challenge inspection. Diverging views have been expressed on the roles of the Executive Council and the requesting and requested State party with regard to the evaluation of the results of a challenge inspection. In dealing with this issue two basic considerations should be borne in mind. First, it seems unrealistic to assume that the Executive Council, a truly political body consisting of representatives of sovereign States, can be prevented from discussing the report of a challenge inspection communicated to it and

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expressing its own opinion on whether or not the requested State is in compliance. Second, the requesting State or any other State cannot be prevented from drawing its own conclusions and taking those measures it considers necessary to maintain its national security, even if its assessment is not shared by the Executive Council. No individual State can be bound by decisions or measures adopted by the Executive Council which it perceives as jeopardizing its national security.

For me the following questions result from these basic considerations: Does the "bilateral versus multilateral" distinction have practical implications for the challenge inspection régime? If so, in what way would it have to be taken into account? Do possible actions of the executive Council or the requesting or requested States parties have to be prescribed or described in the convention? In cases of non-compliance, what is the difference in post-inspection procedures between routine and challenge inspections? Bearing these questions in mind, I wonder whether the issue cannot adequately be covered by the provisions on the political organs of the Organization as set forth in article VIII of the convention.

Let me in conclusion address another very important point concerning the challenge inspections régime - the question of protecting sensitive installations. This question has been widely discussed, and a number of provisions to this end have already been elaborated. I would just like to recall in this regard the provisions contained in the protocol on inspection procedures under the heading "Managed access".

It is on this point in particular that we were able to record a lot of progress last year. However, I recognize that the issue is a very delicate one, in particular since challenge inspections, as they are discussed in the framework of our negotiations, are very broad in scope and have no precedent in the history of arms control and disarmament. I also recognize that a merely conceptual discussion of the implications of the intrusiveness of challenge inspections and possible precautions and measures to protect sensitive information is not enough. The problem cannot be dealt with in the abstract. Rather, practical experience is needed.

To gain such experience we - like others - are currently undertaking a series of trial challenge inspections in military facilities. I am pleased to introduce today the report on our first trial challenge inspection in a military facility. The report has been distributed as an official document of the Conference today. Its results suggest that at facilities like the ammunition depot chosen for our first trial, an effective challenge inspection might be possible without sensitive information having to be disclosed. It was encouraging to see that what we have termed in our report "secondary indicators" may in certain cases do a lot to dispel doubts about compliance.

We would welcome a discussion on our findings within the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. And I am confident that such a discussion will contribute to the further clarification of the as yet unclear concepts of alternative measures and managed access. The question of whether and, if so, how alternative measures would differ from managed access has stimulated considerable discussion. It remains to be answered convincingly. In my view

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we should discuss whether the notion of alternative measures is not outdated, and whether the concerns underlying this concept are not already covered by measures designed to protect sensitive equipment and information and, in particular, by what is now understood as constituting managed access.

At the end of last year we conducted another trial challenge inspection, which focused in particular on the methods and equipment needed in a challenge inspection. I hope soon to be able to provide a report on this trial inspection as well. We have planned further trial challenge inspections in order to gain a better insight into the possibilities of protecting sensitive installations, and also with a view to answering the question of the role of the observer of the requesting State party and to what extent he should have access to the inspection site.

We are looking forward to an in-depth discussion of the problem of challenge inspections. We hope that this issue will be discussed matter-of-factly, with determination and realism. We should in all frankness explain our positions and also address those aspects which may pose difficulties. A problem-oriented, unbiased approach seems to me to be best at this juncture. In concluding my statement today I wish to take this opportunity to pledge my delegation's full support for this year's Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, Ambassador Hyltenius. I am confident that with his experience and diplomatic skills he can lead the way, togehter with his dedicated collaborators and his able working group chairmen, Mr. Lamazière, Mr. Meerburg and Dr. Krutzsch, to the early conclusion of a chemical weapons convention.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Wagenmakers.

Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on taking up the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that our Conference will fare well under your dynamic leadership. We fell confident having you as our President. The importance that Nigeria attaches to the work of the Conference on Disarmament was clearly brought out once again by the statement of His Excellency the Minister of External Affairs of Nigeria on 1 March. In passing, I would also like to thank you very much for the kind words you spoke on that same day - 1 March - about the period during which I had the honour and privilege to serve the Conference as its President during the month of February.

I would like to make a short statement on behalf of the Western Group. I welcome the presence here of so many participants in the Women's Meeting for International Women's Day. We listened with great interest to the message addressed to the CD. Once more it was brought out that our Conference does not work in a vacuum - we are not a world in itself; we serve the world. We are aware of the expectations of the world community, and I would like to bring out our awareness of the recent changes in the world, the many positive changes in all parts of the world and also in Europe after the revolutionary year 1989, which adds to the topical relevance of our work in the Conference on Disarmament. Indeed, the Western Group attaches high priority to the early

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conclusion of a chemical weapons convention, and it is well known that we need to spare no effort and spare no energy to arrive at the early introduction of a truly global verifiable ban on chemical weapons. I need not underscore the great importance of nuclear items, and this body devotes considerable attention to them. At the same time, we are aware of the considerable progress in the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, which could well result soon in considerable reductions in their nuclear arsenals. I can assure our visitors today that we feel encouraged by their presence here. Their message delivered to us today constitutes a new and fresh element for our consideration.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mr. Serguei Batsanov.

Mr. BATSANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): First of all, I would like to associate myself with the words of congratulation and welcome on the occasion of 8 March addressed by those who have spoken here today before me to the representatives of the better half of the human race present among us. May that better half always inspire us in our tenacious efforts to prevent war and to reduce the burden of armaments, as well as in other areas. We listened with great attention to the message addressed to the Conference on Disarmament by a number of women's organizations and read out by our Secretary-General, Ambassador Komatina, and we feel that it is a very important statement.

Mr. President, since this is my first statement in March, I would like to congratulate you as your take up your important post and assure you that the Soviet delegation will provide you with full support and co-operation. I also feel that I must express our gratitude to the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands, Mr. Hendrik Wagenmakers, who guided the Conference through its work in February. Under his energetic and tactful leadership we managed to resolve a number of important matters, thus opening the way to a rapid commencement of work on the substance of the issues which we have on the agenda, in particular the prohibition of chemical weapons. It is this specific topic, or rather one of the concrete aspects of it, to which I wish to devote my statement today.

By agreement with the head of the United States delegation, Ambassador S. Ledogar, I am hereby providing information on the fourteenth round of the Soviet-American consultations on the prohibition of chemical weapons, which are being held in accordance with a decision adopted at the Geneva meeting of the leaders of the two countries in November 1985. The fourteenth round of bilateral consultations began on 20 February and is coming to an end today, 8 March. The round was preceded by a meeting between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, E.A. Shevardnadze, and the United States Secretary of State, J. Baker, from 7 to 9 February in Moscow. At that meeting they adopted a joint statement on chemical weapons which contained an agreed overall framework for achieving the aim of eliminating chemical weapons world wide - an aim which the USSR and the United States consider as one of the most urgent tasks. In this connection, I would like to recall that the documents issuing from the Moscow meetings of the ministers

(Mr. Batsanov, USSR)

relating to arms limitation and disarmament issues, including the chemical weapons issue, and the papers on the chemical weapons ban emanating from the Wyoming ministerial meeting in September 1989, have been distributed at the request of the delegations of the Soviet Union and the United States as official documents of the Conference on Disarmament with the symbols CD/973 and CD/974.

In accordance with the instructions given by the ministers at their Moscow meeting, the delegations at the round continued work on a bilateral agreement on the reciprocal obligations of the USSR and the United States pending the international convention including, inter alia, the destruction of the bulk of their CW stocks to equal low levels. It is planned that an agreement of this nature will be signed in June 1990 at a summit meeting. Both parties expressed the hope that such an agreement will confirm the commitment of the USSR and the United States to move towards the achievement of a global ban on the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction. The agreement under preparation is intended to speed up the elimination of chemical weapons throughout the world, and will also help to accumulate a certain level of practical experience in implementing chemical disarmament.

The parties firmly hold the position that the discharge of obligations under the bilateral agreement will not be a pre-condition for, and will not jeopardize, the conclusion and implementation of a multilateral convention banning chemical weapons.

In the fourteenth round good progress was achieved in the elaboration of the text of the future agreement, although there are a number of problems still to be discussed. The participants examined questions connected with the implementation of the Wyoming memorandum of understanding regarding a bilateral verification experiment and data exchange related to prohibition of chemical weapons. Agreement was reached between the parties on an exchange of seven visits to three categories of facilities (chemical weapons storage facilities, production facilities and industrial chemical enterprises) under phase I of the arrangements agreed in the memorandum. It was agreed that the first exchange of visits will involve visits to chemical weapons storage facilities at the beginning of June this year. The delegations to the round practically completed the elaboration of the programmes and other details for the visits to specific categories of facilities. During the visits the parties plan to discuss in detail the applicability of the procedures agreed at the multilateral negotiations to the specific facilities which will be visited.

In pursuance of the agreement reached at the ministers' meetings in Wyoming and Moscow, the delegations started discussing matters of co-operation between the USSR and the United States on technology and procedures for safe and expeditious as well as economically and environmentally sound destruction of chemical weapons. Highly qualified experts from both sides took part in these discussions. Agreement was reached on an exchange of visits to appropriate facilities in the USSR and the United States.

(Mr. Batsanov, USSR)

The United States and the Soviet Union are conducting bilateral discussions on the prohibition of chemical weapons with the intention of helping to achieve further progress in the multilateral negotiations. Delegations at the round of talks discussed certain technical aspects related to matters still awaiting solution in the draft convention on the chemical weapons ban. In the multilateral negotiations the USSR and the United States have submitted proposals on the order of destruction of chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities. The parties reaffirmed their intention of working to speed up the multilateral negotiations in order to resolve the basic pending issues and complete the elaboration of the draft convention as soon as possible. The next round of bilateral consultations is scheduled for April this year.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary, Ambassador Varga.

Mr. VARGA (Hungary): Mr. President, I feel honoured to be able to congratulate you today on taking up the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for the month of March. My delegation is convinced that under your direction we will make headway in tackling and negotiating the important issues on our agenda - the more so because your diplomatic skill, great political experience and devotion to the cause of peace, international security and disarmament make you capable and well qualified to fill this high post in our unique multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. My delegation pledges to do its utmost to assist you in discharging your responsible duties as President of the Conference. At the same time my delegation highly appreciates the outstanding performance of last month's President, the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands, Mr. Hendrik Wagenmakers, who ensured a good and effective start to our deliberations during the first month of the spring session of the Conference on Disarmament this year.

The Secretary of State of my country, Hungary, made a comprehensive statement in our Conference on our disarmament policy just recently. In my brief statement today I should like to associate myself with your congratulations addressed to the participants in the public gallery on the occasion of international Women's Day. My delegation acknowledges with thanks the message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, on the same occasion. I am very pleased to see the festive flowers on your table, and I am happy also to have listened to the welcoming works by the distinguished representative of Sweden, Ambassador Hyltenius, and those of Ambassador von Stülpnagel of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ambassador Wagenmakers of the Netherlands and Mr. Batsanov of the Soviet Union addressed to the representatives of the non-governmental organizations and women's organizations honouring our conference and manifesting a vivid interest in our work. In acknowledgement of all these tributes my delegation feels honoured to wish all women participants and our honourable guests in the gallery today - as I do on behalf of my Eastern European friends too - the best of luck, happiness and success in their family life, work and social activities. I reiterate also with renewed hope my delegation's efforts to continue to work in this

(Mr. Varga, Hungary)

distinguished Conference in concert with every delegation to attain our common goals - a world without arms and fear, progressing uninterruptedly with the elaboration of effective international agreements banning chemical weapons and contributing to disarmament in other fields as well. I am happy to observe among the reasons why the present international conditions are propitious for positive developments the negotiations between the United States of America and the Soviet Union, the two super-Powers, leading hopefully towards nuclear disarmament, the European conventional force reduction talks, the fading away of the numerous hotbeds of war in the world, the Eastern European spring in democracy, their striving for sweeping political, economic and social reforms, and so on. I am confident that our negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament will help to create favourable conditions for a more peaceful world, in justice and security for the betterment and benefit of mankind.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Hungary for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Peru, Ambassador de Rivero.

Mr. de RIVERO (Peru) (translated from Spanish): As I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, Sir, I should like to congratulate you and pledge the fullest co-operation of the delegation of Peru in your important task. I should also like to wish you every success. I am taking the floor not to refer to any of our agenda items but to follow a Latin American tradition of chivalry and congratulate all the ladies present here on International Women's day, and in particular the Women's Meeting for International Women's Day. In this I fully agree with Ambassador Batsanov of the Soviet Union that women are the better half of humanity and a source of inspiration towards men, except in the production of armaments.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Peru for his statement and for the kind words extended to women. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other member wish to take the floor?

As agreed at the opening of this plenary meeting, I shall convene an informal meeting of the Conference, in five minutes' time, to consider some organizational questions.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.35 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 541st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

I should now like to formalize the agreements that we have reached at our informal meeting today. I put first before the Conference for decision the note by the President circulated by the secretariat as document CD/WP.382, concerning a request from a non-member State to participate in our work. I suggest that we now adopt the relevant decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In connection with the action that we have just taken, I wish to note that the statement made by my predecessor at the resumed 534th plenary meeting of the Conference also applies to the request that we have considered today.

I should like now to turn to the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee under agenda item 5, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". The draft mandate for the Ad hoc Committee has been circulated by the secretariat in document CD/WP.378. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I wish now to put before you the appointment of Ambassador Gerald Shannon of Canada as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee. I understand that there is consensus on this appointment.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I wish, on behalf of the Conference to extend our congratulations to Ambassador Shannon on this important appointment. I should also like to ask the deputy representative of Canada, Mr. Robertson, to transmit to Ambassador Shannon our best wishes for success in discharging the responsibilities which will face him as presiding officer of the subsidiary body.

I now give the floor to the representative of Venezuela, Ambassador Arteaga, who will speak in his capacity as co-ordinator of the Group of 21 for agenda item 5.

Mr. ARTEAGA (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I should like to take this opportunity to express our sincere pleasure at seeing you presiding over the Conference on Disarmament for the month of March. Your recognized qualities as a diplomat, your vast experience and your ability guarantee the best possible development of the work of the Conference under your skilful guidance. I should also like to emphasize that relations between Nigeria and Venezuela have always been characterized by friendship, co-operation and solidarity. We would also like to express our gratitude and at the same time our congratulations to Ambassador Wagenmakers for the effective and productive way in which he guided the work of the Conference during the month of February. I should also like to stress that relations between the Netherlands and Venezuela are extensive and significant. Finally, I would also like to express my gratitude for the kind words of welcome that you have addressed to me on the occassion of my joining the Conference on Disarmament.

I am now going to make a statement on behalf of the Group of 21, on the adoption of the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. I shall read this statement in English.

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

(continued in English)

The General Assembly on 15 December 1989 yet again, with an overwhelming majority and with only one dissenting vote, adopted resolution 44/112 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The resolution requests the Conference on Disarmament to consider as a matter of priority the question of preventing an arms race in outer space and to intensify its consideration of that question, in all its aspects, taking into account all relevant proposals and initiatives. The resolution further requests the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish an ad hoc committee with an adequate mandate at the beginning of its 1990 session, with a view to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

The Group of 21 is fully committed to the provisions of this resolution. It considers its adoption as yet another expression of strong support to entrust the Ad hoc Committee with an improved mandate in conformity with the responsibilities of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. The Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space has, over the past few years, already examined and identified the need to reinforce the legal régime applicable to outer space, as well as the need for strict compliance with existing agreements. It has also considered further measures and the need to hold appropriate international negotiations in accordance with the spirit of the outer space Treaty. In this context the Group of 21 wishes to recall the large number of proposals from all groups introduced in the Conference on Disarmament since the inception of the work of its Ad hoc Committee in 1985.

While continuing to underline the importance of the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and the urgency of preventing an arms race from taking place in outer space, the Group of 21 considers that it has now become necessary to improve the mandate and the organization of work of the Committee so as to make explicit the consideration of proposals for the identification of concrete measures aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space.

Faced once again with a rigid position within the Western Group, the Group of 21 regrets that it has not been possible to improve the mandate. In view of the urgent need to address, without delay, the important question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which requires the prompt re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee, the Group of 21 has decided, once again, to demonstrate further good will and flexibility in agreeing to work on the basis of the mandate of the previous years. The Group of 21 recalls that the mandate covers the consideration of proposals for measures aimed at the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Group of 21 is of the opinion that the Ad hoc Committee should therefore start work immediately, in order to achieve progress and achieve positive results, and expects substantial movement on the mandate issue next year, in keeping with the importance of the subject within the global disarmament agenda.

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

(continued in Spanish)

This is the text of the Group of 21's statement, which I wish to convey to the Conference. I should also like on behalf of the Group of 21 to express our sincere congratulations to Ambassador Shannon of Canada on his election as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on item 5. We are sure that Ambassador Shannon will skilfully guide the work of the Ad hoc Committee and will work resolutely towards the achievement of constructive results that we are all interested in. Ambassador Shannon can count on the full co-operation of the Group of 21.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Venezuela for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to Ambassador Morel of France, who will speak in his capacity as Co-ordinator of the Western Group.

Mr. MOREL (France) (translated from French): Before I speak on behalf of the Group of Western Countries, allow me, Sir, since I am taking the floor for the first time this month, to congratulate you on taking up the post of President and say how pleased we are to see you guiding our work with competence, efficiency, benevolence and even, as you showed us this morning, humour. Nor can I refrain from recalling that this month of Nigerian presidency is starting just after the visit to France by the President of the Republic of Nigeria, which was an enormous success and demonstrated our excellent relations once again. Allow me also to extend my congratulations and thanks to Ambassador Wagenmakers of the Netherlands for the remarkable way in which he presided over the Conference in February, securing from us collectively through his actions the adoption of important decisions which, I believe, consolidate the spirit in which we work.

Speaking on behalf of the Group of Western Countries, I would like to express our satisfaction at the fact that the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space has been re-established for this session, with a mandate adopted in the same conditions as in the last session. We believe that the sterile pursuit of a procedural debate leads only to a waste of valuable time which we wish to devote totally to the Ad hoc Committee's substantive work. Moreover, we are convinced - and experience last session provided ample proof of this - that the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee adopted by the Conference is sufficiently clear, broad and flexible to allow all interested delegations to contribute in a constructive way to reading our common goal, the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As in the past, the Western Group intends to play an active part in the work of the Ad hoc Committee. It addresses its warmest congratulations to Ambassador Shannon of Canada on his election to the chairmanship of the Ad hoc Committee. It is proud to see a very competent representative, from a country very committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, taking up this senior post. It assures him of its full support in his important task and is ready to get down as soon as possible, under his leadership, to the specific details of the organization of the Ad hoc Committee's session.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of France for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of China, Ambassador Hou Zhitong.

Mr. HOU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, as I am speaking in the plenary for the first time this month, I would like to congratulate you on taking up the presidency of the Conference for the month of March. We are convinced that under your outstanding guidance the Conference will continue to achieve new progress, and we would like to thank the Ambassador of the Netherlands for his outstanding work and contribution during his presidency in the month of February. Under your guidance, Sir, the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space has been formally re-established, and this is another step forward in a short period of time. For this reason I would like to congratulate you and other delegations. I would also like to congratulate the Ambassador of Canada on his appointment as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee. I hope that under his Chairmanship new progress will be made on the important issue of the Prevention of an arms race in outer space. China's principled position on the prevention of an arms race in outer space is well known, and I will not repeat it. At the same we express our support for the Group of 21's positive position of principle on this issue. We appreciate the constructive efforts made by the Group of 21 to ensure an early start to the work of the Ad hoc Committee. The Chinese delegation will, as always, continue to co-operate in a meaningful way with you, Mr. President, as well as with the Group of 21 and other delegations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of China for his statement and the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Mongolia, Mr. Erendo.

Mr. ERENDO (Mongolia): I think my Ambassador, when he speaks in the plenary, will more officially congratulate you on taking up the presidency for this month. Nevertheless, I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on taking up this important position, and to pledge the co-operation of our delegation.

As item co-ordinator of our Group, my delegation would like to express satisfaction at the establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on outer space. At the same time I would also like to express the appreciation of our Group to the Group of 21 for their spirit of co-operation and compromise, which made possible the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. I would also like to recall that we in our Group also hoped that the mandate could be improved in accordance with the General Assembly resolutions of the last three years, but it proved to be impossible to improve the mandate this year. We hope that next year we will have an opportunity to look into this matter more profoundly and be able to improve the mandate in accordance with the expressed will embodied in the General Assembly resolutions.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Mongolia for his statement and the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Canada, Mr. Robertson.

Mr. ROBERTSON (Canada): Mr. President, on behalf of Ambassador Shannon, I would like to thank you and the other members of the Conference on Disarmament for your kind messages and congratulations. I shall convey these to him. Ambassador Shannon regrets that, because he has been called to meetings this week in Ottawa, he was not able to be with us today. He will, however, be returning this weekend and I am confident that he will prove to be an active hands-on Chairman, who will use his very best endeavours to ensure that the work of the Ad hoc Committee on outer space is productive and useful.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Canada for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

The secretariat has circulated today the timetable of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies during the coming week. As usual, the timetable is merely indicative and subject to change, if the need arises. On that understanding, I suggest that we adopt the informal paper.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I have no other business for today, and I now intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 13 March, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.